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# A New Historical Materialist Interpretation of the Role of Historical Figures: On the Concept of “Makers of History in a Broad Sense”

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## ABSTRACT

This paper explores the issue of historical figures (influential people, mainly leaders who stand out in history) “making history.” Accordingly, it proposes and demonstrates a new interpretation of the role of historical figures as “makers of history in a broad sense.” To dialectically accommodate the relationship between “times” and “heroes,” historical figures’ coming to prominence and their activities are thought of as the combined effects of historical necessity and contingency. The roles of historical figures are analyzed specifically according to different circumstances in line with the objective laws of history. The interpretation uses historical examples to illustrate the idea that the decisions of historical figures have the power to decisively influence a country’s history in certain periods, and even dominate the nature of a certain social stage through their actions; at the same time, the most effective actions of historical figures somehow essentially reflect the masses’ needs. In this sense, this paper argues that the principles of historicity, objectivity and value should be employed comprehensively to make critical judgments on historical figures.

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This paper has set itself the task of strengthening and developing the methodology of historical materialism in terms of different kinds of social abstraction. This involves analyzing and evaluating the relative importance of different groups and individuals in explaining historical change. It is also important to identify and refute common fallacies surrounding this issue.

## 1. Identifying the Status of Historical Figures

It is a view held by some Chinese textbooks that the makers of history could only be the masses, defining the concept of “the makers of history” as “those who reflect the laws of social development, and promote social development” (see Chen and Yang 2010, 226; Li, Wang, and Li 2004, 219). This is a reasonable abstraction, but still relatively narrow.

In the Marxist tradition there have been three main abstractions for identifying the different roles historical figures can play in making history. One of them is the idea

that only the masses directly or ultimately make history. The people are the only driving force to create world history (Mao 1991, 1031). Another is that history is collectively the result of the combined efforts of the masses and their leaders. The era of treating leaders as the sole historical creators while ignoring the roles workers and peasants played has gone. The destinies of the nation and of the country are not only determined by its leader, but primarily by millions of working masses (Stalin 1956, 228). The other abstraction has it that history happens where the actions of the masses are molded by conflicts between historical figures (this all depends upon the context of the historical period in question), put another way, “joint forces” form or create history, as Engels suggested. Based on the three abstractions, we believe it is necessary to construct a new interpretation of “makers of history” in a broad sense. To accomplish this task, we should observe “history” thoroughly and systematically.

Bai Shouyi, the Chinese historian, thinks of the word “history” as denoting two different phenomena: on the one hand, it denotes “objective history,” which is the objective process of the development of human society; on the other, it denotes “written history,” which is a record and study of the former (Bai 1981). Likewise, Danish historian H. Kragh introduces two kinds of “history”: historical reality or objective history and various historical studies and corresponding findings on objective history (Kragh 1987, 20–21). Obviously, the “history” of the “makers of history” must belong to the “objective history” dimension, otherwise, some historians would usurp the role of “makers” of history. Then, how is the “objective process” of history formed? In one of his famous letter on historical materialism (“A Letter to J. Bloch” in September 21, 1890), Engels explained,

History is made in such a way that the ultimate result is invariably produced by the clash of many individual wills of which each in turn has been made what it is by a wide variety of living conditions; there are thus innumerable conflicting forces, an infinite number of parallelograms of forces, productive of one result—the historical event which itself may be seen as the product of a power operating unconsciously and involuntarily as a whole. For what each individual wants is obstructed by every other individual and the outcome is something that no one wanted. Thus, the course of history up till now has been like a natural process and has, indeed, been subject to much the same laws of motion. But the fact that individual wills—each of which wants what it is driven to want by bodily constitution and extrinsic and, in the final analysis, economic (whether personal or general social) circumstances—do not attain what they want but merge into an overall mean, a common resultant—does not justify the conclusion that they are nonentities. On the contrary, each one contributes to the resultant and is, to that extent, part and parcel of it. (Engels 2010a, 35–36)

The innumerable individual wills and conflicting forces not only different in moving directions, but also different in strengths. Although each one contributes to the resultant, those relatively more powerful ones indeed have greater impact. That’s why it’s necessary to emphasize the distinguished contributes of historical figures as the makers of history. Meanwhile, the formation and movement of resultant is full of fortuitous elements, that makes history a “progressive movement from the lower to the higher, which asserts itself through all zigzag movements and temporary retrogressions” (Engels 2010c, 383), other than a continuous linear process. In certain periods in history when the forces of reaction are greater than the forces of progress, the “objective process” of history is likely to show its temporarily zigzag and retrogressive characters which go against the long-term progressive trend of social development. The Japanese imperialist invasions of China and

Southeast Asia, the German Fascist invasions in Europe led by Hitler, and the genocide of native Indians by American colonists, for example, went against the trend of historical progress. In these cases it is impossible to deny the decisive responsibility of the reactionaries for the backwards steps of human history. Therefore, to be critical, historical changes must be considered as the result of “struggles” and “compromises” between progressives and reactionaries—innumerable forces of historical figures and ordinary people are included, where sometimes reactionaries are dominant. There is no doubt that the actions of the people reflect the laws of social development and promote social development, but we cannot take it for granted that the “makers of history” can only be the masses for progress. This is an implication of what Engels said about “the formation of joint forces” explaining the complex and diverse process of “historical creation.” It is on this basis that we propose the new concept of “makers of history in a broad sense.”

History is not only about material production and consumption, but also involves political, spiritual and cultural development. It has been argued,

Historical materialism starts from the basic principle that social existence determines social consciousness, the mode of material production is fundamental to the existence and development of human society, and that human history is, first of all, the history of production development, that is to say, the history of the working masses who undertake material production. (Pang 2009, 67; translated from Chinese)

From this some scholars carelessly slip into making the exclusive abstraction that “the masses are the only makers of history.” Although the major powers who create the history of spiritual, cultural and political development are derived directly or indirectly from the masses, it is undeniable that politicians, great minds, scientists and artists, who play a role in history, cannot be explanatorily reduced to the masses. From this point of view, it is inappropriate to regard the ordinary people or the oppressed and exploited working class as the only makers of history.

The masses cannot be exclusively accorded the status of makers of history. Apart from the masses, the historical subjects who make history are progressives and reactionaries who make important contributions to history not always in conformity with the laws of social and historic development through representing different segments of society. This broader view does not deny the narrowly defined concept of the “makers of history” as the masses. The concepts of makers of history in a broad sense and in a narrow sense actually bring clarity to historical interpretation from different perspectives.

It is apparent that we can give critical and objective judgment on the role that historical figures play only when we admit their identity as makers of history.

## 2. Interpreting the Activities of Historical Figures through the Dialectical Relationship between Historical Necessity and Contingency

Although the nature of the activities of historical figures can be either progressive or regressive, people do not have the power to make history as they please, but only in accordance with the constraints of their circumstances. These constraints involve necessities and contingencies. The rise to prominence in history of certain historical figures and their actions are the combined effects of historical inevitabilities and contingencies. At the same time, the contingencies of historical figures’ coming to the fore and their actions could be transformed into necessities under certain conditions. To be effective historical

figures must seize the opportunities that circumstances give them and use them to promote historical progress. There are three ways of looking at this idea.

The first way is that it is inevitable that historical figures come to prominence. First of all, it is social and historical needs that bring the historical figures up. “There were always distinguished characters sprung up as long as social conditions and opportunities which could facilitate to perform their talents” (Plekhanov 1961, 368; translated from Chinese), hence the expression that “a hero is nothing but a product of his times.” Napoleon I would not have been a great man if the French Republic was not exhausted by war and in desperate need of a leader on horseback. Also, the appearance of some regressive characters in history also followed the trend of social development under certain historical circumstances. Just as Marx commented on Napoleon III: “how the class struggle in France created circumstances and relations that made it possible for a grotesque mediocrity to play a hero’s part” (Marx 2010b, 57). Secondly, the actions of historical figures are constrained by social and historical conditions. The social nature and historical conditions of their times were an established necessity, historical figures were not likely to go beyond the necessity to play a part (Zhou 1982), actually the necessity would surely be reflected in various ways on them. Any historical figure’s activities show a certain kind of historical limitation.

The second way involves the contingency of historical figures coming to prominence. There are two reasons to list for this: first, accident plays a very large role in the fortunes of individuals’ political careers. Engels pointed out that “such a [great] man, and he alone, should arise at a particular time in any given country, is, of course, purely fortuitous” (Engels 2010b, 266). This says that when, where, and in what way a specific historical figure appears, is contingent. For example, in the middle of the nineteenth Century, why was it Marx, rather than somebody else, who constructed the outlook of historical materialism and theory of surplus value? It was actually caused by different accidental factors. Secondly, the personalities of historical figures and the roles they played in history were contingent. It is also a matter of luck that historical figures affected the destiny of history, because of their gifts, wills, characters, and even appearances. In 1917, under Lenin’s leadership, the October Revolution of Russia was successful; the Chinese Revolution was a triumph with Mao Zedong’s leadership. India, however, with similar national conditions to China, was not blessed with a leader like Lenin or Mao Zedong.

The third way emphasizes the combined effect of both historical inevitabilities and contingencies. The relationship between the inevitabilities and contingencies that led historical figures to come to prominence is mutually complementary and dialectically unified. On the one hand, the contingencies of the appearance of historical figures are subjected to necessities. “Wherever on the surface chance holds sway, it is always governed by inner, hidden laws and these laws only have to be discovered” (Engels 2010c, 387). The contingencies of historical figures’ appearance effects history, and both the extent and scope of the effects depend on the levels of social development, on the comparison of different social forces and on the situations individuals found themselves in. Personal factors can only be an element that promotes historical development under certain historical circumstances, namely in a dimension of space and time within a certain social structure and social relations (Zhou 1982). If historical figures ignore the local social and historical conditions of their times, they can hardly succeed, even for great men like Napoleon or villains like Hitler. On the other hand, the contingencies of historical figures’ appearances open the way for the necessary changes of social and historical development. Hence the

expression “heroes create the times.” However, the “times” here has a different meaning from the same word in another expression “the times produce their heroes.” The latter refers to the social and historical circumstances in macro level that bring up the heroes, whereas the former means the specific conditions the heroes made in micro level which actually pave the way for the necessary historical changes. The path pioneered by historical figures is not always regular and fixed; sometimes it can be uneven. Furthermore, the contingencies of historical figures’ coming to prominence and their activities can be transformed into necessities under certain circumstances; but not all contingencies will be converted into historical inevitabilities, they can only when complying with the contingencies of objective laws. Historical figures who go against the historical tendencies of their times will be frustrated in their endeavors by historical necessity. Even if the contingencies conformed to the laws of social and historical development, certain conditions are still needed to complete the transformation from contingencies to necessities. For example, as a contingent event, the Xi’an Incident, which is launched by General Zhang Xueliang and General Yang Hucheng in order to force Chiang Kai-shek to stop the civil war and unanimously resist the Japanese aggression together with Communist Party of China (CPC), would hardly turn into a necessity without the national people’s enthusiasm of resisting Japanese aggression, the development of the international united front for world peace, the request of resisting Japanese aggression by powerful groups from various provinces, the growing strength of the left wing of Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT), and the firm stance of anti-Japanese and active mediation of CPC, although in conformity with the objective law of historic development.

### 3. Understanding the Role of Historical Figures through the Dialectical Relationship between Objective Laws of History and Subjective Wills

Engels said, “the course of history is governed by innate general laws” (Engels 2010c, 387). It is inadvisable to understand this from a vulgar and mechanical perspective. Objective rules, which determine the course of human history, are not the same as natural laws that operate independently of human action. They do not exclude the people’s subjective wills and their initiatives, rather, objective historical laws exist and realize their value through human wills, activities and creativity, consequently leading to the uncertainty of historical causal relationships (Zhang 2009, 172–173).

When he complained that some people misinterpret the economic situation as “the only decisive element” in the process of historical development, Engels particularly stressed that although economic conditions are the foundation, it contains different factors of superstructures which represent humans’ subjective wills, such as politics, law, philosophy and religion. These all have impacts on the historical struggle and sometimes even play decisive roles in some forms (Engels 2010a, 34–35). It is not self-contradictory to say that the development of human history is governed by internal objective laws and that the role of contingencies, including the subjective wills of individuals, both effect the course of historical development. Generally speaking, in the field of nature history, objective laws cannot be changed by people’s subjective wills, however, in the field of human history, objective laws are exactly based on subjective wills. The “subjective wills” here is the wills which overcome the randomness of every single individual will and thus have objectivity. That’s why the development of history have both regular sides and purposeful aspects. As the subjects of history, the people are not passively subjected to the restrictions

of objective laws, but actively explore, understand, and grasp the objective laws, then apply them in their own practice, make their own choice from many possibilities. For example, with economic and social development, the information era has gradually emerged, which is historically inevitable. But when and how it comes and its impacts on people's production and living are not determined by the objective laws of history in advance, but by the creations and choices of the masses who are engaged in it. As a matter of fact, people will face various kinds of choices when dealing with concrete issues in history. In some critical moments, some great men can actively undertake the historical missions that transform the world and society, with their foresight and strong sense of historical responsibility (Plekhanov 1961, 373), they expressed actively and consciously in history—the inevitable and unconscious process, and made wise choices in line with the direction of historical development. On the contrary, there are also some historical figures who shoulder the primary responsibility for certain reactionary historical events and even certain reactionary historical periods because of their own mistakes, such as Hitler for the start of Second World War, Gorbachev for the collapse of Soviet Union, etc.

Therefore, when dealing with the issues on understanding of the roles historical figures play, it is absolutely necessary to acknowledge and emphasize the objective laws and necessities of historical development. At the same time, since “history is nothing but the activity of man pursuing his aims” (Marx and Engels 2010, 93), it will definitely lead to a mechanical understanding of historical process if we overemphasize the objective laws and necessities of history, ignoring the significant even decisive roles of historical figures who were brought up by contingencies. There are some criticisms about Li Zehou, a famous Chinese philosopher, saying that “he does not pay enough attention to the predominant role of objective laws of history, but excessively emphasizes the occasional roles of historical figures,” which is “a typical argument that reflects the outlook of historical idealism” (Chen 2010, 314; translated from Chinese). However, this criticism, which ignores the accidental effects of human beings, is also biased.

#### **4. Evaluating the Merits and Faults of Historical Figures from the Dialectical Relationship between the “Hero” and the “People”**

Despite the fact that everyone in the world joins to make history, not every single person can be the driving force of historical progress. The key of judging historical figures' merits and faults is to identify whether or not their activities basically meet the needs of the majority of the people. Otherwise, although some historical figures might have determined specific parts of historical processes or consequences (Plekhanov 1961, 372), they ultimately cannot be classified as driving force of historical progress.

There has always been controversy regarding the relative statuses of the “hero” and the “people.” Plato argued that man is born to be divided into the ruling master and the natural slave, which is unchangeable (Feng and Xu 2000, 67). Hegel suggested that ordinary people stay in a passive position while only the hero can shoulder arduous tasks and gain achievements, that is to say, there is a fundamental distinction between them (Hegel 2001, 276), consequently, making an opposition between hero and people. B. Bowell opined that on the one hand, only a small portion of gifted and talented people are actually the makers of history, and ordinary people are the negative forces who hinder historical progress (quoted in Feng and Xu 2000, 67). Thomas Carlyle even used the metaphor of “goat”



and “sheep” to classify people into two classes, namely, the ruler and the ruled, aristocracy and civilian, lord and servant (Marx 2010c, 144), emphasizing that the world history is “in essence the history of great minds who got involved in different activities around the world” (Karel 2007, 1; translated from Chinese). On the contrary, many Russian populists in the 1860s and 1870s chose to believe in the historical outlook which shows more respect to the people, denouncing the outlook of advocating heroes. To be specific, Peter Kropotkin supposed that any revolution must be built on the revolutionary uprising of the masses (Department of International Communist Movement, Central Compilation and Translation Bureau 1983, 279), nevertheless, as a result of his erroneous historical idealism, he still reckoned that the concept of man determines the development of history. There are other academics who are in favor of the viewpoint that the masses are the makers of history, however, they defame and even deny the contributions made by the “hero,” moving to another extreme. For example, Mignet argued in his book “the history of The French Revolution” that during the climax of the masses’ participation in a revolutionary movement, the “hero” is dominated by the revolutionary fervor of the masses so that he can play very little role in it (Mignet 1977, 50–51). Consequently, the heroes do everything to please the masses, and even bend their knees in worship (Mignet 1977, 88).

All the opinions above have misunderstandings of “heroic figures” and give wrong verdicts of the relationship between “historical figures” and “the masses.” In fact, “the people” is not merely an abstract concept, but also a concrete historical concept in its constitution. The people are composed of real living individuals. Historical figures grow up from ordinary individuals. Without ordinary individuals, historical figures are just like water without a source, a tree without roots. The millions of people’s heroes grew up in the anti-fascist war are the best example. On the other hand, historical figures may also reduce to ordinary people when the “time” change invalidate their distinguished role. Regarding their social roles, historical figures were the initiators, organizers or leaders, to achieve historic tasks, playing key roles in the development of history, sometimes, even a decisive one, meanwhile the masses could also be the initiators to complete certain historical missions and they are always the major powers and the final and decisive forces in the development of history. Take China’s New Democratic Revolution for instance, without the right leadership of great leaders such as Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai, the Chinese people would have to grope in the dark for many years before they could achieve final victory. On the other hand, it’s precisely because they represent the interests of the revolutionary classes and the progressive forces, mirror the people’s demands and therefore have their support, can Mao and Zhou play a decisively important part in the revolution. In this sense, in the final analysis, the masses are the major powers and the final and decisive forces of China’s New Democratic Revolution.

There is no doubt that Marxism does not deny the role of eminent persons at all, nor does it deny that it is the masses who create history (Stalin 1979, 299). Historical experience shows that historical figures have the power to decisively influence a country’s history in certain periods, and even dominate the nature of a certain social stage through policy. How much historical power do historical figures exercise? It should be insisted that historical figures’ power is limited, after all, the masses of the people are the ultimate decisive forces to undertake historic change, as Engels said that it is the motivation of the masses at play, rather than the motivation of outstanding figures, in terms of the real dynamics behind the final motive forces that made history (Engels 2010c, 389). The involvement



of historical figures can be decisive for historical progress only when it essentially reflects the fundamental requirements and interests of the masses; otherwise, although historical figures may have a significant impact on the course of history in the short-term, they cannot become decisive progressive forces in history, instead they will hinder and delay historical development.

In this sense, it is imperative to rectify a popular fallacy on these issues. It is nonsense to argue that a historical figure is a representative of the people, reflecting the essential requirements and interests of them as long as the majority support him/her during a certain period of time. For example, there are popular opinions that the reason, why fascist leaders of Germany, Italy and Japan came to power and carried out their domestic and foreign policies, why Gorbachev and Yeltsin led the Soviet Union to switch to capitalism and to collapse,<sup>1</sup> and why the president of the United States decided to launch the Iraq war, are that their actions reflect the requirements and interests of the people, because these leaders are elected by the people. This is entirely wrong, because on the one hand, people always participate in historical activities in a certain structure of social power, which is not completely or consciously willingly chosen by themselves, and they do not positively enjoy the true freedom of choice. On the other hand, the masses may be misguided by wrong information from the mainstream media and national education, then make unwise choices which do not embody their essential requirements, true wishes and fundamental interests. In the process of historical development, sometimes there are inconsistencies between people's ostensible wills and their essential wills, but there will ultimately be consistency, though the final consistency, either forever after or temporarily, is actually contingent on the interaction among various social forces. This is a new point of view that historical materialism must cover.

## 5. Establishing Several Principals for Judging Historical Figures

Historical figures always act on the stage with certain social and historical constraints, they can't broke the objective laws of history, or change the overall trend of social development. When we acknowledge this point, we can adhere to materialism in terms of evaluating historical figures. On the basis of affirming the statues of objective historical laws in social development as well as the great impact of the masses, it is imperative to identify the different roles that different historical figures play. When we acknowledge this point, we can insist upon the scientific method of dialects in terms of evaluating historical figures (Zhou 1982). Besides the two fundamental viewpoints, there are other specific principles which should be taken into account.

The first principal is to view historical figures from historical perspective. The appearances of historical figures are produced by the needs of their times, their historical impact, as a result, is subjected to social and historical circumstances during the times they live. As Marx said, "Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past" (Marx 2010d, 103). Therefore, the problems should be defined within certain historical scopes when evaluating historical figures. To put it another way, the potential objective evaluation can be drawn only when we put these persons into the context of their own social and historical backgrounds and

employ the historical perspective. Here it must be pointed out that most often, we can hardly give a critical judgment on historical figures from novels, films and television programs, because of their random fabrication and cutting of history at will, which also leaves the door open for the deconstruction of historical figures by historical nihilists. On the other hand, there were no person who doesn't wear certain imprint of times, then, has his/her historical limitations. Therefore, it's improper to use abstract principles to evaluate historical figures all through the ages, or criticize the people in the past from modern perspective.

The second principle is the principle of objectivity. To achieve the aim of objectively evaluation of historical figures, the first mission is to reconstruct the historical facts concerning as objective as possible, instead of relying on hearsays or subjective conjectures. When it comes to academic researches, examining the reliability of references should be put into the first place. Where there are some studies reduced their academic value by believing everything is true in *Chiang kai-shek's Diary* (Xia 2013). Secondly, all the subjective influential elements such as individual emotions, criteria, and wishes, etc., should be reduced as less as possible when evaluating historical figures, more can't ignore objective facts on purpose for personal interests. Another request is to consider the historical figures' overall activities through their entire life under the social and historical contexts of that time, take the person's characteristics into account, analyze comprehensively from the perspective of development, and make objective and dialectical judgments on their merits and priorities, never confined to one condition or one problem, to be specific, neither overgeneralize from one period to a person's entire life, nor only attack a person's drawbacks, ignoring strengths (Chi 1993). There also are some works keened on picking faults with revolutionary leaders and heroes, then exaggerated them greatly, even fabricate disinformation to deny the governance legitimacy and high performance of Communist Party of China, obviously lost their objectivity, let alone authenticity which is the first principle of academic study (Zhao 2012).

The third principle is the principle of class analysis. In a society of different classes, everyone's activity is closely linked to the class interests that they represent. As Marx said, "I paint the capitalist and the landlord in no sense couleur de rose. But here individuals are dealt with only in so far as they are the personifications of economic categories, embodiments of particular class relations and class interests" (Marx 2010a, 10). In this sense, we are supposed to stick to the principle of class analysis when evaluating the historical figures of any class society, i.e., adopt the method of Marxist class analysis, analyze the macro historical circumstance and specific social relations of production the historical figures involved in, fully explore the class motivation behind superficial individual motivation from their thoughts and practices, so as to identify which class's interest they actually represented. It should be noted that class analysis is not the same as labeling a person according to their class origin. For example, at the end of the Qing Dynasty, the advocates of westernization movements, the diehards, the reformists and the conservatives, *all* came from the landlord class and they *each* played very different historical roles. The principle of class analysis is not only an important principle in the evaluation of historical figures, but also a primary method to analyze and criticize some of the ideas from historical nihilism that belittle China, slander revolutionary leaders and defame heroes. Just as Lenin argued that, people are fully aware of their respective class interests, hence, they will surely be happy to see the ruling class are their agent, and if not so, they will take various measures

to resist opposite class or hostile opinions (Lenin 1984, 422). It's obvious that those nihilists are not on behalf of the broadest masses of the people.

The fourth and final principle is that of value. Are there any specific standards applying to the value judgment of a historical figure? From Lenin's perspective, it is not based on whether or not the achievements of historical activists met the requirements of the modern world, but according to the fact that whether or not they made further progresses or contributions that their predecessors did not achieve (Lenin 1984, 105). However, it is a pity that Lenin did not give explicit answers about what further contributions basically included. In Chinese academic circles, there are diverse answers to the criteria of judging historical figures, i.e., the criterion of social development or social progress, the criterion of social needs, the criterion of productivity, the criterion of moral integrity, and the comprehensive criteria (Xu and Li 2012). These criteria, in essence, are expected to conform to the trend of historical development and to be beneficial to the development of productivity and social progress. This is the basic standard of judging the value of a historical figure.

Understanding history is a necessary for knowing the truth of the world; grasping the laws of history is a premise for realizing the rules of society. Correspondingly, the primary method for destroying a nation is to first undermine its history—trampling on national history to deconstruct national culture, national self-confidence and national identity. No matter which country is concerned, critical evaluation of historical figures has a crucial educational function in promoting the spirit of patriotism, safeguarding proletarian ideology, clarifying the legitimacy of governance, and initiating a road of benign development for the future.

## Note

1. As Mao Zedong said in August 11, 1965, to the Politburo's Standing Committee of the Communist Party of China, "leaders and leading groups are of great importance . . . In many cases, things change when leaders change" (see Party Literature Research Office of the CPC Central Committee 2013, 521; translated from Chinese).

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## Notes on Contributors

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